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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0873
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1702
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 7944
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 7869
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2026
TAGS: PREL ETRD EAGR MARR MNUC KNNP PARM KN IN IZ

JA
SUBJECT: EAP A/S HILL'S APRIL 12 MEETING WITH MOFA NORTH
AMERICAN AFFAIRS DG KAWAI

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Joe Donovan. Reason: 1.4 (b)(d)

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Summary

¶1. (C) During an April 12 meeting, MOFA North American Affairs DG Kawai told EAP A/S Hill that Prime Minister Koizumi hopes to resolve several outstanding bilateral issues before he visits Washington in June 2006. Japan understands issues remain concerning the relocation of some Marine Corps assets to Guam and within Okinawa, but Kawai assured A/S Hill that progress is being made and that he is satisfied with the process. Kawai argued that public opinion is very skeptical about the safety of U.S. beef, making it difficult for the government to move ahead with efforts to resume trade. Kawai added that the government cannot be seen as bowing to outside pressure to resume trade at the expense of safety. On India, Kawai acknowledged that India has a growing need for energy resources, but argued that Japan must cautiously consider how to approach the non-proliferation implications of the proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement. END SUMMARY.

North Korea

¶2. (C) Assistant Secretary of State Chris Hill met on April 12 with MOFA Director General for North American Affairs Chikao Kawai to discuss bilateral security and trade issues. Japan appreciates the firm and direct U.S. approach with North Korea, Kawai stated. He did not expect any criticism from the Japanese press for the lack of direct meetings with North Korea this time. A/S Hill said he was very satisfied with the results of the week's meetings and commended Japan and China on their close bilateral cooperation on North Korea.

DPRI and Kitty Hawk Replacement

¶3. (C) Kawai observed that he would meet soon with DUSD/AP Lawless to continue discussions on the relocation of Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to Nago City. The issue is not yet resolved, Kawai noted, but the GOJ is working with local

authorities to resolve any outstanding issues. There is some continuing debate about the configuration of the proposed runway for the Futenma replacement facility to avoid having aircraft fly over neighboring communities. Kawai drew a diagram for A/S Hill and explained that current thinking favors a v-shaped configuration vice an x-shaped one. The mayor of Nago City already has accepted the proposal, but Okinawa Governor Inamine has not. Kawai told A/S Hill that Inamine wants to see a final plan for reducing the number of U.S. Marines on Okinawa before he accepts the new proposal for Futenma.

¶4. (C) Japan is interested in relocating some Kadena-based U.S. F-15 training flights to Honshu or Hokkaido to reduce noise pollution in Okinawa, Kawai continued. Moving the training would also provide joint training opportunities for the U.S. Air Force and Japan's Air Self-Defense Force, he pointed out. DCM Donovan reminded Kawai that the U.S. pledged only to study the proposal in last year's 2 2 statement.

¶5. (C) Japan appreciates U.S. efforts to reduce its military footprint in Okinawa, Kawai stated, but deciding cost-sharing responsibilities for relocating U.S. military assets to Guam has become a difficult issue for the Japanese government. Opposition parties are staunchly opposed to Japan shouldering a large share; such criticism is making it hard for the LDP to sway public opinion to support the move. Kawai mentioned he will meet with Keidanren officials later that week to explain the benefits to Japan of the transformation and why it is crucial to the security of Japan.

¶6. (C) Some people in Japan have argued that the move to Guam primarily benefits the United States and that Japan should not pay anything, Kawai observed. In turn, the LDP is arguing that the move is in response to a long-standing request by Japan for the U.S. to reduce its military presence in Okinawa and Japan should therefore shoulder some of the burden. Cost-sharing discussions will likely require more time to reach a compromise.

¶7. (C) Japan is working closely with the U.S. to resolve the Kitty Hawk replacement issue, Kawai continued. The mayor of Yokosuka remains opposed to the porting of a nuclear aircraft carrier there, but MOFA is confident that the process is moving forward smoothly. A/S Hill pointed out the long safety record of U.S. Navy nuclear powered warships and extremely low likelihood that any sort of accident would occur. Kawai argued that the Japanese public is very sensitive on nuclear issues, making this an emotional issue on which the GOJ must tread cautiously.

BSE

¶8. (C) Beef is another emotional issue Koizumi hopes to have "pretty much" wrapped up before he visits Washington in June, Kawai commented. He admitted that concerns about the safety of U.S. beef have been exaggerated in Japan by the media; Kawai cited a recent poll indicating 70 percent of the Japanese public opposes resuming beef trade with the United States. A/S Hill argued that the longer beef trade is suspended the deeper the perception of a lack of safety is ingrained in Japanese consumers, ultimately making it more difficult to resume trade. The DCM urged Kawai to have Japan provide a detailed road map designed to end the ban. Kawai responded that the government currently is developing a timeline to resolve the issue but remains uncertain about the real prospects for reaching a decision before June. The government hopes to avoid any perception that a resumption of beef trade is linked to Koizumi's visit. Because consumer preference is more psychology than science, he added, a rational argument in favor of resuming beef trade may not be sufficient to win over Japanese consumers.

¶9. (C) On India, Kawai noted that Japan needs more information from the U.S. on the details of its agreement with India and how the matter will be handled in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The fact that IAEA safeguards will cover some Indian facilities is good, but explaining the possible double standard the deal sets is difficult. Basing the argument on India being a stable democracy might not be sufficient. At the same time, Japan recognizes the legitimate and growing demand for energy resources in India.

¶10. (C) A/S Hill noted that energy scarcity will become a reality as India and China continue to develop and consume more resources. Congress eventually will approve the India agreement with some additions and conditions, he stated. Kawai said Japan may not reach a decision on India for "weeks or months," but relations with India are a high priority topic in Japan these days due to a growing bilateral strategic dialogue and attention from high-level politicians, including PM Koizumi and Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe.

Iraq

¶11. (C) Kawai told A/S Hill that Japan is looking forward to beginning working-level talks in London next week with coalition partners to discuss how to transfer authority over to the Iraqis. Kawai noted that stability in the Middle East is vital to Japan's national security for energy and non-proliferation reasons.

Participants

¶12. (U) Participants on the U.S. side were:

Christopher Hill, EAP Assistant Secretary
Victor Cha, NSC Director

Joe Donovan, Deputy Chief of Mission
Matthew Wallace, Embassy notetaker

Participants on the Japan side were:

Chikao Kawai, Director General for North American Affairs
Masaaki Kanai, Principal Deputy Director, First North
American Affairs Division
Osamu Izawa, Principal Senior Foreign Policy Coordinator
Mr. Mori, notetaker

¶13. (U) Assistant Secretary Hill did not have an opportunity to clear this message.

SCHIEFFER